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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 MC-02
EUR-12 IO-13 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
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SP-02 SS-15 IGA-02 /089 W
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O R 101045Z MAR 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0449
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, BR, MASS
SUBJECT: POLITICAL AND PRESS REACTION MARCH 7-8 TO GOB'S
REJECTION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE

1. SUMMARY. US-GOB RELATIONSHIP IN GENERAL AND FALLOUT FROM HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT EPISODE IN PARTICULAR DOMINATED PARESS MARCH 7-8, WITH FOCUS ON LIKELIHOOD OF PUBLIC RELEASE OF DOCUMENT. GOB REPORTEDLY HELD EXPECTATION AS OF MARCH 7 THAT EPISODE WAS CLOSED AND U.S. EXECUTIVE WOULD ACT TO AVOID A RECURRENCE BY PREVENTING PUBLICATION OF REPORT; THAT HOPE, OR EXPECTATION, WAS SHAKEN, THOUGH NOT ELIMINATED, BY ARRIVAL LATE YESTERDAY OF TEXT OF CHRISTOPHER TESTIMONY BEFORE SENATE, ANNOUNCING RELEASE OF ALL REPORTS WITHIN TWO WEEKS. GOB IS REPORTEDLY CONSIDERING RETALIATORY STEPS IN EVENT REPORT IS RELEASED, TO INCLUDE STIFF NOTE OF PROTEST AND/OR TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT RECALL OF AMBASSADOR PINHEIRO. SOME STORIES DESCRIBE REPORT
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AS EMBASSY PRODUCT. OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN, MEANWHILE, CONTINUED TO PLAY DOWN FLAP, AND MARCH 9 PRESS (WHICH REPORTED SEPTEL) SHOWS SOME DECLINE IN STRIDENCY AND QUANTITY OF COVERAGE.

2. SUPPORT FOR GOB POSITION REMAINS STRONG AMONG POLITICIANS OF BOTH PARTIES, ALTHOUGH THERE IS GROWING FOCUS ON

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HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT WITH SOME MDB MEMBERS PROPOSING SPECIAL TESTIMONY BY FOREIGN MINISTER BEFORE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ABOUT REJECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. IN SALVADOR, CARDINAL DOM AVELAR BRANDAO HAS SPOKEN OUT ON MORAL OBLIGATION OF GOB FOR OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. EMFA CHIEF POTIGUARA INDICATED WITH BRAVADO THAT BRAZIL WANTS TO SELL NOT BUY ARMS, BUT WAS ALSO LOOKING AT ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR EXTERNAL PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT. SOVIET AMBASSADOR CALLED AT FOREIGN MINISTRY MARCH 7, BUT DENIED TO PRESS HE DISCUSSED REJECTION OF US AID OR BROUGHT SOVIET OFFER OF ARMS.

3. PRESS COMMENTARY MARCH 8, PRINCIPALLY IN FOLHA, FOR FIRST TIME INCLUDED ARTICLES CRITICAL OF DOMESTIC HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PRESENT CONTEXT, WHILE O ESTADO'S LONDON CORRESPONDENT POINTED TO WESTERN EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, ALONG WITH NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUE AND HEAVY BRAZILIAN INDEBTEDNESS, AS KEY GOB VULNERABILITIES IN SUSTAINING FRG/GOB NUCLEAR ACCORD. END SUMMARY

4. USG-GOB RELATIONSHIP IN GENERAL AND FALLOUT FROM HUMAN RIGHTS EPISODE IN PARTICULAR CONTINUED TO DOMINATE PRESS AS OF MARCH 8, THOUGH SOME DECLINE OF COVERAGE NOTICEABLE MARCH 9. NEWS COVERAGE FOCUSED ON LIKELIHOOD OF PUBLIC RELEASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, CITING CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES; EMBASSY PRESS ATTACHE; MARCH 7 WRITTEN SENATE TESTIMONY OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER (WIDELY REPORTED IN FULL DETAIL OR TRANSCRIPT), INCLUDING STATEMENT THAT ALL 80 REPORTS WOULD BE RELEASED WITHIN TWO WEEKS; AND SIMILAR REQUEST BY SENATOR HUMPHREY.
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5. AT SAME TIME, PRESS REPORTED WIDESPREAD HOPE, OR EVEN EXPECTATION, YESTERDAY IN GOB CIRCLES, THAT THE EPISODE APPARENTLY HAVING TERMINATED BY MUTUAL CONSENT AFTER ITAMARATY/EMBASSY CLASH ON SATURDAY, AND BRAZIL HAVING ELIMINATED THE NEED FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT BY RENOUNCING SECURITY ASSISTANCE, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD EXERCISE THE DECISIVE INFLUENCE IT PRESUMABLY WIELDS WITH CONGRESS TO WITHDRAW OR PREVENT PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT. IN THIS CONTEXT, JORNAL DO BRASIL REPORTED SUBSEQUENT ITAMARATY SURPRISE OVER CHRISTOPHER STATEMENT ON RELEASE OF ALL REPORTS, WHILE O ESTADO CITED CONTINUING HOPE BASED ON BELIEF THAT DECLARATION MAY BE MERELY A GENERALIZATION FROM WHICH BRAZIL IS EXCLUDED.

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6. GOVERNMENT CIRCLES WERE REPORTED OF THE OPINION THAT OFFICIAL RELEASE OF REPORT (THOUGH PERHAPS NOT ITS UNINTENTIONAL AND POSSIBLY UNAVOIDABLE LEAKAGE TO THE PRESS) WOULD REPRESENT A PROVOCATION -- "ACT OF AGGRESSION" BEING A LABEL FREQUENTLY APPLIED BY MILITARY SOURCES IN PRESS. SEVERAL MAJOR PAPERS, CITING UNNAMED OFFICIAL SOURCES IN CONSISTENT TERMS, INDICATED THAT PUBLICATION WOULD RESULT IN A GOB REACTION, MOST LIKELY A "BRUISING" NOTE, OR EVEN AMBASSADOR PINHEIRO'S RECALL ON CONSULTATION OR REASSIGNMENT FROM WASHINGTON.

7. AT THE SAME TIME, OFFICIAL GOB SPOKESMEN WERE ATTEMPTING TO PLAY DOWN EVENTS. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SPOKESMAN CAMARGO DECLARED THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS "CONTINUE NORMAL, ABSOLUTELY NORMAL," AND RETURNED TO HIS CHESS GAME METAPHOR, LEAVING IT CLEAR THAT NEXT MOVE WAS UP TO U.S., BUT ADDING "I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE EPISODE WAS FINISHED SATURDAY." (AT SAME TIME, CAMARGO TOOK INITIATIVE TO EXPLAIN TO REPORTERS THAT GOVERNMENT'S MOVE
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IN RESTRICTING RADIO/TV COVERAGE OF EPISODE TO THE CONTENT OF THE BRAZILIAN NOTE, WAS ADOPTED IN ORDER "NOT TO EXCITE THE POPULA-TION...CONSIDERING THAT THERE IS NO INTEREST IN CREATING A CLIMATE OF HYSTERIA OR EXCITATION.") FINANCE MINISTER SIMONSEN,

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FOLLOWING A LUNCHEON WITH U.S. SENATOR MATHIAS, TOLD NEWS CONFERENCE, "WE WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID FRICTIONS... BUT UNFORTUNATELY IT ALSO DEPENDS ON THE OTHER SIDE." HE DECLARED THAT HE SHARED MATHIAS' VIEW THAT THE EPISODE SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP, AND NOTED THAT THE U.S. ECONOMY IS COMPARTMENTALIZED AND THAT THE LENDING DECISIONS OF PRIVATE BANKERS ARE INFLUENCED BY STRICTLY ECONOMIC, NOT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN APPARENT EFFORT TO CALM NERVOUSNESS HERE, SIMILAR OPINION WAS VENTURED BY OFFICIALS OF PLANNING SECRETARIAT, AND PRESS GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO REMARKS IN SAME VEIN BY ARNOLD WOLFSON, PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN BRAZIL.

8. SUPPORT FOR GOB POSITION THAT US INTERFERED IN BRAZILIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS CONTINUES BUT SOME POLITICIANS ARE NOW BEGINNING TO FOCUS UPON THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. MARCH 8 PRESS INDICATED THAT MDB DEPUTY ARAUJO JORGE, ALLEGEDLY WITH THE SUPPORT OF 40 OTHER DEPUTIES, PETITIONED ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT MACIEL TO HAVE FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA TESTIFY BEFORE THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ABOUT BRAZILIAN REJECTION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE. ARENA LEADER IN THE ASSEMBLY BONIFACIO, INDICATED HE WOULD NOT FIND SUCH A MEETING USEFUL. MDB SENATOR PAULO BROSSARD, HOWEVER, INDICATED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE MINISTER'S TESTIMONY ABOUT THE US HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. FUTURE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, FOREIGN ELATIONS COMMITTEE MAGALHAES PINTO INDICATED HE DID NOT THINK FOREIGN MINISTER'S TESTIMONY WAS NECESSARY AND SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT LINE THAT IT WAS BETTER TO CONSIDER THE DISPUTE CLOSED.

9. IN SALVADOR, CARDINAL DOM AVELAR BRANDAO VILEALA NOTED THAT THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT HAD THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OBSERVANCE AND FULFILLMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY.
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HE ADDED THAT PRESIDENT GEISEL HAS DEMONSTRATED SENSITIVITY AND SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SOLUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE FOR NORALIZATION OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS WHILE STRESSING BRAZIL'S RIGHTS TO DEFEND ITS NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY.

10. AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF DEOCLECIO INDICATED MARCH 7 THAT IT WAS STILL PREMATURE TO SPEAK ABOUT POSSIBLE BREAK OF THE USG-GOB MILITARY ACCORD. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ABOUT BRAZIL'S SURVIVAL WITHOUT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE, DEOCLECIO SAID THAT "BRAZIL IS VERY LARGE, HAS GREAT POTENTIAL AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY LIVED WITHOUT US ASSISTANCE." EMFA CHIEF, GENERAL POTIGUARA, TOLD PRESS MARCH 7 THAT THERE ARE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE MECHANISMS FOR THE EXTERNAL PURCHASE OF MILITARY MATERIEL. BUT HE ADDED "WE DO NOT WANT TO BUY; WE WANT TO SELL." SIMILARLY, WAR COLLEGE COMMANDANT, GENERAL

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TOURINHO, TOLD PRESS THAT BRAZIL IS ON THE WAY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN ARMAMENTS NOTING THAT BRAZIL HAD CREATED A DOMESTIC ARMS INDUSTRY. BRAZILIAN CHIEF DELEGATE TO JBUSMC, ADMIRAL JANUZZI, INDICATED THAT ITAMARATY NOTE WAS "PERFECT" AND HAD HIS SUPPORT BUT INDICATED "THE REJECTION IS A CLOSED SUBJECT". ARTICLES IN FOLHA AND O ESTADO NOTED FRENCH OFFICIAL RETICENCE ON ISSUE AND COMMENTARY IN FRENCH PRESS TO EFFECT THAT FRANCE WILL LIKELY BENEFIT FROM BRAZILIAN AND SOUTHERN CONE DIVERSIFICATION OF ARMS PURCHASES AWAY FROM U.S.

11. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT AFTER MARCH 7 MEETING AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO BRAZIL JUKOV DECLARED HIS SOLIDARITY WITH BRAZILIAN POSITION NOTING THAT "HUMAN RIGHTS ARE AN INTERNAL PROBLEM OF EACH COUNTRY." HE DENIED HAVING SPOKEN AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT THE REJECTION OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE OR ANY OFFER OF SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE, SAYING "THIS IS A MILITARY PROBLEM IN WHICH I AM NOT INVOLVED. I CANNOT ANSWER."

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AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
SECDEF WASHDC
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12. IN CONGRESS IN SPITE OF THE OBJECTION OF SEVERAL MDB DEPUTIES, INCLUDING MDB ASSEMBLY LEADER FURTADO, MDB SECGEN THALES RAMALHO SAID IT WAS HIS EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROPOSE THAT MDB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ASKED FOR AN AUDIENCE WITH GEISEL TO PRESS ITS SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY OVER THE

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RENUCIATION OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE. MDB
NATIONAL PRESIDENT DEPUTY GUIMARAES SAID THAT
HE SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT BUT THOUGHT IT SUFFICIENT
THAT THE PARTY MAKE ITS FEELINGS KNOWN DIRECTLY TO THE
NATION.

13. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THE HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENT
WAS CHRISTENED BY THE PRESS AS THE REPORT OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY."
AN ARTICLE IN O ESTADO SO REFERRED TO IT, AS DID A PIECE
BY FOLHA'S NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT PAULO FRANCIS, WHO
ADDED AN EVEN-HANDEDLY SARCASTIC ASIDE ABOUT (BRAZILIAN) "DIGNITIES
OFFENDED" (HIS QUOTATION MARKS) BY "AMBASSADOR JOHN
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CRIMMINS AND HIS READER'S DIGEST OF OUR NEWSPAPERS."

14. WHILE O GLOBO AND FOLHA DE SAO PAULO CARRIED AMBASSADOR
CRIMMINS' STRONG DENIAL OF ACCURANCY OF STORIES IN RIVAL NEWS-
PAPERS JORNAL DO BRASIL AND O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, PURPORTING
TO DESCRIBE CONTENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, O ESTADO ELABORA-
TED ON ITS EARLIER ACCOUNT, CLAIMING GOB IS PARTICULARLY
OFFENDED BECAUSE REPORT ALSO CONTAINS DATA ON THE BRAZILIAN
MILITARY, ITS EQUIPMENT AND UTILIZATION THEREOF, AND REFERS TO
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN BRAZIL, THE
LATTER IMPLYING CRITICISM OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC MODEL.

15. MOST PAPERS CARRIED DETAILED ACCOUNT OR FULL TEXT OF
WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S
HARDLINE APPROACH TO BRAZIL ON NUCLEAR ACCORD.

16. PRINCIPAL COMMENTARY MARCH 8 CAME IN FOLHA DE SAO PAULO AND
O ESTADO. FOLHA CARRIED OPPOSING COLUMNS ON POSITION OF THOSE
IN MDB AVERSE TO PERSONAL EXPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY WITH PRESIDENT
GEISEL. ON CRITICAL SIDE, LEAD COLUMN MAINTAINED THAT MDB SHOULD
DISTINGUISH LOCAL DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS FROM QUESTION OF US INTER-
FERENCE, REPELLING THE LATTER AND THEREBY GAINING GOVERNMENT'S
RESPECT. BY CONTRAST, SECOND COMMENTATOR DECLARED US POSITION'S
COINCIDES WITH MDB STRUGGLE ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PARTY'S
ALIGNMENT WITH REGIME AT THIS MOMENT WOULD COMPROMISE THE
ESSENSE OF ITS POSITION; PIECE NONETHELESS FAULTS CARTER ADMIN-
ISTRATION TACTICS AND THE DAMAGE THAT MAY BE DONE TO THE ONE
FORCE IN BRAZIL (GEISEL) WHICH HAS BEEN ABLE TO IMPROVE SITUA-
TION. A THIRD ARTICLE MAINTAINS THAT, TO ITS DISCREDIT, REGIME'S
OWN LIMITATION ON DOMESTIC DISCUSSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS
OPENED DOOR TO INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS AND THE US MOVE,
WHICH -- DEPENDING ON DEGREE OF GOB REACTION -- MAY BE BUT
THE FIRST STEP IN THE "ASPHYXIATION" OF A COUNTRY HEAVILY
IN DEBT AND VULNERABLE TO US PRESSURE.

17. COLUMNIST NEWTON CARLOS, IN FOLHA AND CORREIO BRASILIENSE,

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POINTS TO URUGUAY AND NICARAGUA AS TWO COUNTRIES WHERE US
SUPPORTED REPRESSIVE REGIMES WHOSE PRACTICES IT NOW CONDEMNS,
AND FORESEES THAT NEW US POLICY, IF PURSUED, WILL
COLLIDE WITH INDEPENDENT LINE TAKEN BY MULTINATIONALS CONCERNED
WITH PROFITS IN HOST COUNTRIES.

18. O ESTADO'S LONDON CORRESPONDENT HERMANO ALVES CITES UNDER-
LYING US DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MADE CONFRONTATION WITH
SOUTHERN CONE ON HUMAN RIGHTS INEVITABLE, WITH OR WITHOUT JIMMY
CARTER, AND ASKS TO WHAT DEGREE GOB RESPONSE WAS AN "OVERREACTION,"
REFERRING TO INSINUATION BY WASHINGTON SOURCES THAT CONVENIENT
TIMING OF REIS VELLOSO'S TRIP TO US IN SEARCH OF CREDITS
(JUST BEFORE LATEST EPISODE) INDICATES THAT GOB KNEW WHAT WAS
COMING. ALVES GOES ON TO ASK WHETHER HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM MIGHT
NOT REPRESENT HONORABLE ESCAPE FOR FRG FROM FULFILLMENT OF
NUCLEAR ACCORD, AND CITES ANALYSIS OF DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES THAT THREE
FACTORS NOW RENDER BRAZIL HIGHLY VULNERABLE ON THE ISSUE:
1) THE POWERFUL INSTRUMENT WHICH THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT
REPRESENTS IN THE HANDS OF JIMMY CARTER FOR THE MOBILIZA-
TION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE ACCORD;
2) THE NON-PROLIFERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE PER SE,
EXAC ERABATED BY SUSPICIONS AROUSED AS THE RESULT OF
BRAZIL'S REFUSAL TO SIGN THE NPT; AND 3) THE COUNTRY'S HEAVY
INDEBTEDNESS, WHICH RENDERS IT VULNERABLE TO US PRESSURES
GIVEN THE LIKELY NEED FOR DEBT RESCHEDULING OR CONSOLI-
DATION IN THE FAIRLY NEAR FUTURE.
CRIMMINS

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